

eVA Connections

September 2008 Issue 3

Virginia's Total e-Procurement Solution

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Welcome!

Welcome to eVA Connections, an e-newsletter published by the Bureau of e-Procurement, Division of Purchases and Supply, Department of General Services. eVA Connections brings together the businesses, state and local government buyers, other public bodies, and various public service officials, who contribute to eVA's success. eVA Connections highlights various eVA tools, users, and experiences, in celebration of the value that e-procurement brings to the Commonwealth.

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20th Annual Forum Navigating shifting tides

Navigating shifting tides - Virginia leading the way is the theme of the 20th Public Procurement Forum, November 17-19 at the Hampton Roads Convention Center.

Hosted by the Department of General Services, Division of Purchases and Supply, the Forum is Virginia's largest event for state and local procurement professionals and supplier partners.

"Our theme seems particularly appropriate this year in light of economic uncertainties and other challenges as we strive to continue Virginia's tradition of excellence,"

explains Ron Bell, Director of the Division of Purchases and Supply. "To surpass previous achievements requires dedication and hard work. We believe the Forum, with its outstanding program of education, networking opportunities and practical lessons for work and life will help contribute to success."

Forum 2008 offers workshops covering 45 topics--from enhancing opportunities for Small, Women and Minority-owned businesses to eVA, Virginia's total eProcurement solution. Other sessions will address procurement essentials and professional development. More than 450 buyers from across the Commonwealth attended last year's event.

An event favorite is the one-day Expo where buyers and suppliers can meet and exchange information about products, services, and public purchasing needs. Over 120 suppliers attended the 2007 Expo, an all-time record and a strong indicator of the effectiveness and value of this event. This year there are over 140 vendors with the majority in the SWaM category, giving buyers the opportunity to develop new SWaM business relationships.

Forum 2008 features prominent keynote speakers like Julio Melara, whose compelling rags-to-riches story about excelling and enduring in a changing world has captivated audiences across the country. Jon Hansen of Ottawa, Canada, an internationally recognized expert and leading blogger on eProcurement systems, brings an insightful perspective to this important topic. Additional speakers include Scot Case, a leading voice in the green procurement field, Gloria Berthold, who helps organizations develop and expand their supplier diversity programs, and many others to help interpret and reinforce the Forum theme.

Whether you are a seasoned pro or near the beginning your career, the Forum has something to offer. Sign up today and learn how to make a difference in your organization. Additional information about the Forum can be found at: <http://dps.dgs.virginia.gov/forum2008>.



VHDA Launches eVA e-Procurement

Barb Layman knows purchasing. She also knows about change. With a variety of purchasing management roles under her belt, Barb was the right person to the lead the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) over an exciting new threshold—and into the world of e-procurement.

"I've been a part of public procurement in Virginia since 1993," Barb says, looking back on her career in state government. Joining VHDA in February 2007 as the Procurement Manager, Barb reflects on her extensive personal experience with eVA.

A Captain For Change

"I was an early adopter of eVA--my first experience with eVA began as the Department of the Treasury's Procurement Officer. Since then, I've used eVA at two other state agencies and it's been rewarding to see eVA grow to well over 32,000 vendors and more than 12,600 individual users," she adds.

As an authority, VHDA is not required to use eVA, the way executive branch agencies are but VHDA is joining almost 500 localities, public schools and groups such as community service boards, which choose eVA as an economical solution to common public sector purchasing challenges.

"It was time to modernize our

"Rather than buying our own expensive software, and getting locked into maintenance and upgrades, we decided to go with eVA."

Barbara Layman
Procurement Director
VHDA

purchasing process," Barb explains. "We were limited by an outdated, underutilized purchasing system. Even though we were using the Internet to find sources, it was still possible to have two associates in need of the same item, making their separate purchases in a vacuum."

Anchor's Aweigh!

Not only is eVA so much more efficient for sourcing—by using the power of the Internet to notify numerous firms simultaneously that match the buyer's needs—but purchasing shops can evaluate trends over time to learn exactly how much of a given item or service they purchase.

"VHDA is proud to be joining the growing group of public entities not mandated to use eVA, but clearly experiencing the benefits of a more streamlined process. We love Quick Quote and the robust, detailed reporting for supplier diversity, green procurement, and state contract usage. These tools are enabling us to move from primarily paper-based purchasing to a truly electronic procurement management system," Barb adds.

"An aggregate look at the relative expenditures in broad categories helps us develop strategies for volume savings and see where our funding is going. I think our constituents will appreciate the big picture eVA gives us on day-to-day purchasing activities," Barb explains.

Barb points out the other major factor in VHDA's decision to go with eVA. "The price was definitely right!" she says. eVA is available to localities and public sector organizations like VHDA at no charge.

Localities and other public bodies should be aware there are limits to the level of support the state can provide adopting organizations. These limits are clearly outlined for interested users, along with a set of straightforward ordering guidelines. As long as adopters observe these guidelines, and stay within the margins of support, use of eVA by



The VHDA e-Procurement Implementation Team

Back Row: Mike Boice, Pat Oliver, Jackie Gibbs, Rick Doll
Front Row: Debbie Field (DGS/DPS), Joe Claiborne, Marc McGlade, Barb Layman

localities and other non-state public bodies is free of charge.

Does every organization need a formal implementation team like VHDA?

"Not necessarily. Many of our smaller entities such as rural localities take a simpler approach and adopt eVA with one or two people and a basic approval flow," explains Debbie Field, Local Government Account Executive with DPS/DGS.

"VHDA wanted something more--to take advantage of eVA's most flexible feature--highly customized approval flows, across multiple business units--to align eVA with their internal accounting procedures. This team approach helped them address their organization's larger business needs."

VHDA Launches eVA e-Procurement

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A Ship-Shape Crew

VHDA has a Project Management Office that executes any organization-wide project—from Building for the Future - a building renovation and infrastructure upgrade project to website modernization. This has enabled a collaborative approach, systematic communication, and few surprises. One such project team evaluated the usefulness of an outdated purchasing system that was little more than a purchase order printing mechanism, determined the current and future procurement needs, and arrived at eVA as the solution to modernize VHDA's



purchasing process.

Marc McGlade, VHDA's eVA team project manager talks about the importance of this organization-driven, employee-led, approach to major change. "Because of our mission to help Virginians attain quality, affordable housing, we needed to modernize our purchasing process without any impact on our core services. It was important to have the entire organization behind the effort, prepared for the changes, and poised to lead a seamless implementation," he explained. As project manager, Marc led a team of representatives from every impacted unit in VHDA through a se-

ries of regular meetings, a schedule of assignments, concrete deliverables and deadlines.

Promoting Supplier Diversity

"We're committed, in our day-to-day procurement of services, supplies and construction, to ensuring fair consideration of all suppliers," says VHDA Executive Director Susan Dewey. "We believe that working with a wide range of suppliers provides a competitive edge in buying high-quality, low-cost innovative products and services. eVA is a good fit with VHDA's procurement process," Susan continues, "because it makes it easier for us to encourage small, women-owned and minority (SWaM) supplier participation. It also helps us conduct business in the most efficient and professional manner possible."

Steady As She Goes: Barb Layman Talks About Managing Change

"I'm in the midst of a public procurement career full of exciting challenges and have been fortunate to experience it with such different agencies, the Department of the Treasury, the College of William and Mary and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) before joining VHDA."

Barb and other procurement managers have watched state agencies evolve, from eVA's earliest pilot days, through various phases of implementation. Because of the technology learning curve, some agencies would get further along with eVA adoption than others. It has really depended on the direction of each agency's upper management and the agency's access to training resources.

While at VDACS, Barb was immersed in eVA. "VDACS was 100 percent eVA," Barb explains.

"I came into the VHDA project with first-hand experience with a successful organization-wide implementation at VDACS and I was certain eVA could work for VHDA. I very much wanted us to follow the VDACS example." And follow it, they did. In the first 90 days with eVA, VHDA issued almost \$1.6 million in orders.

DPS Account Executive Debbie Field was also part of the implementation team.

"You'll always have your leaders when it comes to new technology. But without proper management, most of the crowd will lag behind, staying in their comfort zone. Without certain oversight, new users

tend to lose sight of eVA as a first line of defense, and slip back into old purchasing habits," says Debbie.

A veteran in public purchasing, herself, Debbie was previously procurement manager with the Virginia Department of Health, and is knowledgeable not only about eVA, but with public procurement policy, as well. As part of VHDA's implementation, Debbie led a

"This has been a real partnership," says Barbara. "Two separate entities, working together. The state is helping us, and we're improving our service to the Commonwealth."

Barbara Layman
Procurement Director
VHDA

comprehensive training program, taking 60-plus managers and staff through eVA buyer training.

"This has been a real partnership," says Barb. "Two separate entities, working together. The state is helping us, and we're improving services to our customers and the citizens of the Commonwealth."

DMBE's Sam Hayes Steers Virginia's Supplier Diversity Initiative

Charting A Course To Leadership

A lifelong yearning to make a real difference for emerging small businesses was finally realized by Samuel Hayes, III, when he was named Agency Director of the Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE) in December 2007.

Hayes reminisces about his early career.

"It was 1988. I was working at the Fairfax Residency for the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), as a Transportation Engineer Trainee, when a man came to visit me from the Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE). He had the most interesting job: To seek out contracting opportunities for a special category of under utilized businesses-- the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)."

The DBE program is one of the federal government's supplier diversity initiatives, and is similar to Virginia's certification for small, women and minority (SWaM) firms. State and local transportation agencies that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) administer the DBE program to enhance participation in transportation-related prime and subcontracting.

"I remember thinking, what a

cool job to have. From that time forward, I always wanted to do something like that—to make a real difference."

As DMBE Director, Hayes leads the Commonwealth's supplier diversity agency, which has

continued to support the federal DBE program, in combination with Virginia's state-based initiative to utilize more small, women and minority (SWaM) businesses in state contracting. "We manage

both DBE and SWaM certification, maintain the databases for those programs, provide outreach and technical assistance throughout the Commonwealth, and work to connect certified firms with appropriate contracting opportunities."

"For the SWaM initiative, we track performance and routinely report our numbers to Governor Kaine. For the DBE program, we partner with VDOT and report Virginia's DBE contracting activities to the U.S. DOT."

Hayes serves two critical functions in his role at DMBE. He is Special Assistant to the Governor for Supplier Diversity, and he serves as the Supplier Diversity Champion for the Commonwealth. A licensed professional engineer, Hayes received his bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Old Dominion University in 1986. He is working towards a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Virginia Tech. He is also a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Before joining DMBE, Hayes was Director of the Office of Procurement and General Services for the Virginia Department of Health, overseeing procurement activities valued at \$175 million. Prior to that, Hayes was Director of Operations for the Roanoke Education

Authority from 2000 to 2006. He has also served as Department/Division manager for the Roanoke Utility Line Services Department and as Resident Engineer for the Richmond Metropolitan Authority. "My various roles managing infra-

structure projects related directly to my training as an engineer."

Navigating Small Business Challenges

"Then my role at the Roanoke Higher Education Authority exposed me to the entrepreneur



Sam Hayes takes the helm of the Commonwealth's supplier diversity initiative. In his office at the Department of Minority Business Enterprise, Hayes maps out strategies to increase contracting opportunities for small, women and minority-owned businesses.

community—regular families—moms and dads—pursuing adult education for a career change or new skills to help operate a family business. I was suddenly able to see what a struggle small businesses face. My knowledge about licensing and liability requirements, the competition, and the ups and downs of trying to run a company—allowed me to see first hand how challenging public sector contracting is for SWaM businesses."

"My experience leading procurement at VDH motivated me even further to want to help tackle challenges for small businesses," Hayes adds. Not only did Hayes eventually take the helm of Virginia's supplier diversity agency, but he dove into the midst of the most sweeping changes in the state's contracting history.

"Intra-agency collaboration is the key to making this initiative work. With so many moving parts—reaching the business owners, procurement policy, technology, all the marketplace conditions--no one agency can single-handedly turn our supplier diversity history around."

Sam Hayes
Director
DMBE

DMBE's Sam Hayes Steers The Commonwealth's Supplier Diversity Initiative (continued from Page Four)

High Seas And Winds Of Change

DMBE has overseen a procurement disparity study, added Women's Business Enterprise certification and oversight, and incorporated "small" into the certification process. "We also created new roles within DMBE—the procurement advocates—who work with agencies on their SWaM plans and help them find certified firms for upcoming contracts," he explained.

"We were also transferred to oversight of the Administration secretariat, for a closer working relationship with procurement management at the Division of Purchases and Supply (DPS), within DGS. We've improved the online certification application and enhanced our online searchable vendor database. We've also expedited the certification process for applicants and minimized the documents required for MBE and WBE certification," he added.

"In another important collaboration, we've incorporated special VDOT job codes to match our certified DBE/SWaM vendors with their upcoming job opportunities. We've teamed with DPS/eVA to get daily updates of SWaM status into the eVA vendor registration database. We've been doing all this while growing and maintaining the certified SWaM database to 15,532 vendors."

"It goes without saying that the perennial question of budget cuts or agency dissolution, amidst all the additional work the agency has taken on, has impacted the staff morale," says Hayes. "My hat's off to the staff here at DMBE, who have clearly stuck it out through some rough times. I'm proud to join such a hard-working group of folks," he says.

DMBE works continuously with eVA/DPS to update SWaM vendor data in eVA every 24 hours.

"Our teams work very closely to ensure that eVA buyers have the most up-to-date information in their bidder's lists."

Sam Hayes
Director
DMBE

Collaboration Is Key

"It's also clear to me that intra-agency collaboration is the key to making this initiative work," Hayes adds. "There are so many moving parts—reaching the business owners, procurement policy, technology, all the marketplace conditions. No one agency can single-handedly turn our supplier

diversity history around," he says.

DMBE works continuously with eVA/DPS to update SWaM vendor data in eVA every 24 hours. "Our teams work very closely to ensure that eVA buyers have the most up-to-date information in their bidders' lists. In a future project, we'll be

investing in new technology to ensure that DMBE and eVA databases are a mirror image of one another," he explains. Cutting edge data cleansing software will work through the normalization of the two data sets, which has previously been done manually. "This data irregularity has been a challenge, as vendors may not show up as certified in certain NIGP codes in our database, while they are certified and offer that

product or service on the eVA side. For supplier diversity to work, the buyers need one clean, and up-to-date set of information on their vendors. We'll be partnering with DPS/eVA to implement this."

Understanding Certification

Hayes says the process of certification is often misunderstood. "We get asked by vendors, 'why do I have to provide so much documentation?' or 'why can't you just take my word that I am small, woman or minority owned?'"

Buyers also chime in, often suggesting that for convenience, certification should be more of a fast-track experience," he adds. Most people may have forgotten that Virginia used WBE self-certification for years, accepting simple declarations on W9 forms that a firm was woman owned. Also, when eVA was first implemented in 2001, a check box allowed vendors to select their business type. "When we began cleaning up our "SWaM" business database a few years ago, the numbers in our pool of SWaM vendors took a dive. This was painful for all parties involved, but was a necessary step in maturing our supplier diversity efforts. If the Commonwealth is making awards to firms that aren't legitimate—that's not real supplier diversity."

"Entrepreneurs need to see certification for what it really is—making sure your competitors have the same status and advantage as you. We have to verify many things about an entity—legal, organizational—which member or members of the organization drive not just profits, but all corporate decisions where any capital is concerned—human or financial," Hayes explains.

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Hayes Steers Virginia's Supplier Diversity Initiative (continued from Page Five)

Building Capacity

"Getting firms that are 'officially' certified into the contractor pool is only the first step," Hayes explains. "This just gives us a way to measure our SWaM market and track our performance." "If we really want to succeed, we have to grow firms in the sectors where we typically spend the most money—general construction, commercial building construction, and building maintenance. This is theoretically where you have the greatest



capacity for improvement." As the Commonwealth has been working to turn its minority and women owned numbers around since the initial benchmark study was released in 2004, the conversation about diversity is not new, and the status quo is painfully slow to reverse. "First, we have to raise sensitivity to possible prejudice that may still exist toward these groups—whether subconscious or practiced," Hayes explains. "This doesn't go away overnight."

"Then, we want to actively pursue real targets in our day-to-day operations—with careful sensitivity to open competition and public procurement policy—with hopes of realizing more balanced opportunity for all those interested in competing in the public sector marketplace."

But can small, women and minority firms compete at the level of pricing offered by larger competitors? And will the state pay more for something, if they have a less expensive competitor? Many small businesses want a price advantage and say they can't make money doing business at a level that is competitive with what the state has paid in the past.

"Unfortunately in the public sector, we are talking about tax payer money, here. We have to find a balance between being good stewards with public money and keeping our doors open for maximum competition and opportunity," Hayes adds.

How is Virginia doing with the SWaM initiative? Currently about 3% of state spending is done with certified minority-owned businesses. Another roughly 3% is done with certified women-owned firms. About 29% of contract awards go to non-minority and non-woman-owned small firms—giving the state a total of about 35% of its contracting dollars spent with small businesses.

SWaM Firms Face Rough Seas On Voyage To Growth

Size and solvency in sectors with biggest spend In construction, not only is there a smaller ratio of small, women and minority firms, many of them simply aren't large enough to sustain sizeable projects, whether because of staffing or cashflow—this type of limitation more severely impacts the micro-enterprise.

Lack of understanding/difficulty completing complex bids Small businesses that are new to public sector contracting, generally aren't familiar with the RFP/IFB process. They are at a true disadvantage compared to their larger, more experienced competitors, which have more resources for business development, and proven success with bid/proposal submission.

Cash liquidity, insurance coverage and professional licenses required by state or local laws Legal requirements for liability insurance and cash reserves prevent many small businesses from getting to the next level. The training or experience required to obtain certain licenses may also hamper an upstart company in competition.

Lack of experience Lack of completion of similar major projects in the firm's resume—the big firms may have impressive resumes and the pitch is easier for them.

Lasting negative perception Because of certain economic realities, the buy side may have held onto certain ideas that smaller firms aren't as capable. A mix of perception and truth, these pre-existing opinions can sometimes interfere in swift uptake of diversity measures.

Reluctance to wear the certification "label" Some business owners, with lingering feelings of discrimination from the past, prefer the "small" designation for its neutrality—thinking it may have less of a "label" effect. Some women and minority firms don't necessarily want to be identified as merely a "W" or an "M," but prefer to be viewed, simply as a great supplier. There is some fear that the explicit label might work to the firm's disadvantage, if it triggers subconscious holdover emotions in the buyer's mind. This narrows the available pool of measureable firms in the most severely underutilized categories.

In Our Next Issue....

To find out how the Commonwealth is addressing small business challenges, look for our story on the Virginia Department of Business Assistance in the next issue. After four years of collaborating with DGS and DBME to build SWaM vendor capacity, VDBA is moving beyond state procurement to provide small businesses with a broader range of options for growing their sales—and their profits. Learn about VDBA's new approach in our next partner highlight. Visit VDBA's website now at www.vdba.virginia.gov.

Building Supplier Diversity

The impetus for any **supplier diversity** program is that, historically, various barriers have prevented certain firms from being able to compete effectively, whether in public or private sectors. Supplier diversity usually begins with a **procurement disparity study**. Virginia conducted the state's first procurement disparity study in 2004. This type of study examines the **level of contracting** done with certain sectors of the marketplace, and also identifies **barriers to open competition**. While the low participation for certain firms usually doesn't surprise anyone, correcting the situation is never an overnight fix.

Once the relative participation of specific demographics is determined, the **historically underutilized firms** have to be identified in a rigorous and objective fashion, and payments for work completed with their firms are tracked. This is where **certification** comes in.



"The purpose of certification is to accurately identify specific segments of the business community, for the purpose of measurement, and viewing statistics in a particular context," explains **Sam Hayes, Agency Director of the Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE)**. The goal is an official pool of vendors that might be targeted for **contracting opportunities with the Commonwealth**. "Having **third party verification** of a business type is standard approach in certification, whether private, federal, state or local," added Hayes.

Next, an organization has to decide how they will use the certified status, and in what way it can give the qualified firms an advantage. This usually brings up the question of "**set-asides**," in which a

certification category may be targeted for certain contracting opportunities.

"Contracting "set-asides" by race or gender have been attempted by other states or major metropolitan cities around the country, only to eventually be ruled unconstitutional by the U. S. Supreme Court," Hayes explains. To remain within the current law, "**race and gender neutral**" solutions must be exercised first. If these efforts are eventually determined to be unsuccessful, a case could be made for more targeted set-asides.

The Virginia disparity study cited several jurisdictions around the country that had recorded success with "**small**" business diversity initiatives, by using business size to delineate that market's "underutilized" sector, and steering clear of programs based on race or gender. Virginia chose to follow a "small" model that has proven successful in other public sector markets.

The federal government's DBE or "**disadvantaged business enterprise**" program is based on a similar approach to "small," which focuses on business size and economic barriers to success, rather than primarily on race or gender disadvantage. "From a constitutional perspective, set-asides based on "business size" have not yet been challenged in U.S. Supreme Court, and can be a good starting point for a new supplier diversity effort," said Hayes.

Furthermore, since the majority of minority and female businesses are small by even the most conservative definition, these two categories would theoretically benefit from a program focusing on "**small business utilization**."

In Virginia's SWaM program, recently revised purchasing policy gives agencies the option to use "**small business set-asides**" for procurements over \$50,000, as a tool to work toward higher contract participation. Unless otherwise exempted by procurement policy, all procurements up to \$50,000 are set-aside for small businesses. Certified women and minority firms that also certify as "small" are eligible for the set-asides when they obtain **both certifications through DMBE**—either minority/small or woman/small.

Since the initial disparity study only measured procurement history with "women" and "minority" firms, subsequent contracting that is done with these demographic categories is tracked for the purpose of any follow-up disparity studies—for statistical continuity—although within the broader use of "small" for the purpose of "small business set-asides."

For assistance and information on **Virginia's SWaM or DBE programs**, visit www.dmb.virginia.gov or contact the Department of Minority Business Enterprise, 1111 East Main Street, Suite 300 Richmond, VA 23219. Phone: (804) 786-5560. Toll-free : 1 (888) 792-6323 out of state. Or 1(800) 223-0671(VA only).

DPS Awards Small Business Set-Aside Contract For Consulting Services

The Department of General Services/Division of Purchases and Supply (DGS/DPS) recently awarded the first-ever statewide consulting services contracts for 15 non-technology consulting categories set aside entirely for Small Businesses. Agencies periodically retain consulting services to assist with non-technology projects but, until the completion of this solicitation, no single contracting vehicle existed to provide these services. Each agency was responsible for locating and contracting consulting services independently, which was neither efficient nor cost effective.

A review of calendar year 2006 purchases for non-professional consulting services revealed sufficient spend activity to justify the creation of statewide contracts. While historical purchasing cannot guarantee future activity, state agencies spent approximately \$21 million across six NIGP Commodity Codes. (Note: Reported spending volume may include consulting categories not specifically covered by this solicitation and also may include spend with vendors that are not certified small businesses.)

"The goal of the state contracts division is to provide agencies with a convenient sourcing avenue at the most economical price and best value for the Commonwealth, while achieving procurement diversity. We believe the non-professional consulting services contracts achieve this objective."

Ron Bell
Director
Division Of Purchases and Supply

Matt Manion, State Contracting Officer with DPS, developed the solicitation and served as project leader for the DPS proposal review team.

"We are approaching the state contracting process with new ideas and creative strategies, to foster greater opportunities for small businesses, while still being highly competitive," explains Manion.

DPS manages nearly 300 statewide contracts for goods and non-professional services. It's the up-front legwork, vetting of responsible contractors, and complex undertaking of a major RFP that takes considerable administrative time for agency procurement organizations. DPS does the front-end set-up of statewide contracts, then individual agencies

DPS received a record 521 proposals from 99 vendors. Proposals were evaluated using a "Best Value" evaluation process with adjectival ratings such as "Exceptional", "Acceptable" and "Marginal." The Department of Human Resource Management collaborated on the financial review of proposals.

After short listing and negotiations, 36 vendors received awards: six Small Businesses; ten Small Women-owned Businesses; and twenty Small Minority-owned Businesses. Some vendors received an award in more than one category; therefore, a total of 68 contracts were awarded to the 36 vendors.



DPS demonstrated through this solicitation that Small, Women and Minority-owned (SWaM) vendors are available, interested and capable of competing for non-technology consulting services contracts. The contract documents with contractor names, pricing and instructions are available at www.eva.virginia.gov under "State Contracts."

Vendors realize that simply having a state contract in place is not a guarantee of business; they must contact agency buyers to make them aware of their services and capabilities. Several vendors are actively pursuing this strategy and learning how to use eVA's "Order Summary" report, which shows purchasing history by NIGP code. Contract officer, Matt Manion, says "I am happy to work with vendors and agencies to help them be more effective marketing or using these contracts."

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